845 /99 cont./
asked to utter and write spells to hasten the womb. After the
844 infant is born the cord is cut with a pair of scissors and the placenta is buried in the ground in the house or outside.

After childbirth a Miao woman drinks several bowls of cold water for the purpose of purifying her blood. Within three days
846 she goes out to the fields to work. There are cases in which a woman gives birth in the forenoon and goes out to work in the afternoon. It is said that the Miao woman is able to do this by
[278] eating a secret herb. For postnatal nourishment the poor eat
[556] eggs and the rich eat chicken.

553 Recently, the Miao have adopted the Chinese custom of
[177] inviting friends and relatives to a feast and naming ceremony on the third day after a child's birth. A name is sometimes
551 adopted according to the time of birth. For instance, if a child is born in a certain month, it would be named after the month. The chief of the Miao at the time of the rebellion during the
[805] reign of Emperor Ch'ien Lung was called Wu pa-yüeh /Wu, Eighth Month/. Sometimes the name of the season when the birth occurred is adopted. In another case, the weight of the infant may be used as the name, for instance, an infant weighing so many chin at birth will be named for that weight. In still other cases, the name of an animal, a pig, goat, sheep, dog, or cow is used in the belief that the child will be easy to raise.

●853 There is no definite time for feeding the baby. Generally when the baby cries it is fed. If the mother has no milk, the baby is then fed with sugar and rice. At the time of teething,
856 if the first tooth emerges in the upper jaw, it is a sign of ill
[787] omen, portending the death of one of the parents or paternal
[763] grandparents, because the Miao believe that such a tooth is a
[826] grave-digging hoe.

/100/ A pregnant unmarried girl often produces an abortion
847 by swallowing mercury. Illegitimate infants are often drowned.
848 Properly married couples rarely practice abortion or infanticide.

[164 cont.]

768 inherited estate, upon which other children may likewise live, according to the particular arrangements agreed upon.

Among the settled "Méo" tribes (near irrigated rice fields or
423 particularly fertile areas) the idea of property is clearly established. The ground belongs to the one who has cleared it or laid it out, and it is transmitted by inheritance.

Everywhere else customs are found analogous to those of the "Man," the ground belonging temporarily to the one who cultivates it, but it is abandoned when it is exhausted or when a better piece of ground is found near which one goes and settles.

The "Méo" woman gives birth sitting on a tabouret, supported
844 by her mother and by other old women. She afterward lies down on a cot bed. The placenta is buried in front of the door, if a boy is
553 born; it is buried [165] under the hearth if it is a girl (1). Thirty-
852

[775] 1. The "Méo" must know where his placenta is so that he may retrieve it when he is reincarnated.

three days after his birth the child receives his name. Relatives and friends bring presents to him and this is the occasion for a feast
[527] as sumptuous as the resources of the family permit. Gifts and feasts are renewed upon all the birthdays. In principle, the children are
853 nursed for three years.

Abortion is practiced among the "Méo" for all irregular
847 pregnancies (unmarried women and widows). In case of failure, the baby simply is abandoned from the moment of his birth and dies of hunger.

Among certain "Méo" tribes of China the "couvade" still is
846 practiced (the husband goes to bed during the accouchement and receives treatment). This custom is not practiced by the "Méo" of Tonkin, but one observes among them customs that appear to be derived from it. The husband must follow a vegetable diet, he is forbidden to be away from home and to cross over the passes leading toward the neighboring valleys.

582 The "Méo" may contract marriage, either within their own clan, or within any other tribe of the group. They marry very seldom outside their group.

/49 cont./

M 853 [842] The suckling period lasts from three to four years, an observation also confirmed by Lajonquière (4). The ability to

4. II, p. 317.

conceive, however, cannot be decisively influenced by this, for I have frequently seen children three years old and older push aside a smaller sibling in order to get at the mother's breast.

/50/ Wet nurses are unknown. On a number of occasions I saw mothers who did not have enough milk desperately try to feed their children with all kinds of additional foods, especially rice and sugar. There was never any thought of using a wet nurse. Since the Meau do not drink animal milk (cf. the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Cult and Taboo"), such children die of starvation in all such cases.

M [272]

A 842 527 Among the Akha, too, the birth of a child is awaited with joy, but a celebration of the birthday in later years is unknown.

A 844 Childbirth takes place, as among the Meau, in the dwelling, but on the bed itself. The husband, however, plays no role. Instead, the woman in labor is assisted by the mothers of the married couple. Other women are excluded, midwives are likewise unknown. While giving birth, the Akha woman squats in an erect position and is supported by the two older women. The umbilical cord, after it is tied, is severed with a bamboo knife.

A 844 846 [825] The afterbirth and the umbilical cord are buried under the bed of the woman in confinement, and, to be sure, under the head end of the woman. Once a day for ten days hot water is poured over the spot in order to prevent insects and especially termites from consuming what has been buried, for the Akha believe that, if this should happen, the newborn child would die.

/52 cont./

851 are eaten immediately, and their blood is sprinkled on a piece of paper which is then pasted on the wall opposite the entrance [776] door. Chicken feathers are pasted around this paper in honor of the tutelary divinity Xa Xing."

I myself made the following observations:

[782] [775] A pair of chickens, a cock and a hen, is sacrificed to the pair of spirits who introduced the soul of a deceased ancestor into the newborn child (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Ideas about Death and the Soul"). These [231] two animals are killed by having their throats cut, are plucked whole, eviscerated, and cooked. Some of the chicken blood is allowed to drip on the paper of the spirits and is burned while the spirits are invoked. At the main entrance of the house in which the birth took place, a small basket is set in the frame of the opened door, the pair of cooked chickens is placed upon it, and two incense candles are attached. Now the shaman appears and throws his ordeal /oracle/ horns (see the chapter, [787] "Religion and Magic," section on "Magic, Soothsaying, and Interpretation of Omens"), in order to find out whether the omens may be regarded as favorable. Next he begins to evoke [782] the souls of the deceased ancestors. For this purpose he lights the incense candles and puts the sacrificial chickens on their breasts, that is, with their backs upward, and their outstretched legs pointing toward the open door. Then he stands erect in front of the door of the house, with his back turned toward the interior, and murmurs conjurations.

While they are going on, for the better part of an hour, [521] those present, relatives and friends in addition to the parents and children, converse with one another loudly and undisturbed. [854] The mother with the newborn child, which was washed for the first and probably the only time until it is able to walk, /53/ sits somewhat apart in the room and holds the baby on her lap. Her husband does the housework, sets the room in order, looks after the food which is cooking on the hearth, and, in short, goes about his business. A second child, about three years old, [853] is shouting at the top of its lungs and is jealously trying to get his little brother away from the mother's breast so that he himself can drink. He is prevented from doing so, however, by the mother.

AKha A04
Miao AE5

/56 cont./

M 855 [515] [527] a few times during the year. Even the older children are not brought up to be clean and orderly. It is not until the beginning of puberty that they develop a natural desire to keep themselves clean and to dress properly.

A 855 [515] [296] In the villages of the Akha, on the other hand, the children give the impression of being better cared for. They are washed once a day, in the morning or in the evening, and their clothes are also washed and kept in order. Moreover, the children of the Akha are lovingly adorned (see the chapter, "Clothing and Ornaments") and are a very charming sight (Ill. 7).

A M 853 Definite nursing hours are unknown among both tribes. The small baby is fed as soon as it cries, and since the children are as a rule healthy, they usually cry only when they are hungry or tired. Then the mother lifts the child up, puts it in a nursing position, with its back on her arm, and gives it her breast. When it is satisfied, /Ills. 14-17 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /57/ it is fastened again with a carrying cloth to her back, and, if it does not fall asleep immediately, the mother sings it to sleep.

A M 854 The child-carriers (Colored Pl. II, No. 11)[1] are the universe in the lives of babies. They are tied on the back constantly until they are able to crawl, and they are taken out for a short time only to be fed. Otherwise the baby, fastened in its carrier, accompanies the mother while she works in the fields, watches her do the housework (Ill. 66)[2] and is even taken along to a dance. Among the Akha I often saw young widows, with their children fastened in the carrier, dancing on the dance ground and disappearing into the forest with young chaps.

The small baby soon learns to raise himself up in the carrier and, like a little monkey, to cling fast to the mother's neck. Not only the smallest ones are carried about in this manner, however; even children three to five years old are often placed on the back of the mother or the father, either because they have grown tired on the march or because their small legs are unable to master the difficult terrain.

A M [855]

1 [See cat. 116, p 240 - ANALYST]
2 [See cat. 116, p 472 - ANALYST]